

Outline of 1 Corinthians¹

- I. Introduction (1:1-9)
 - A. Salutation (1:1-3)
 - B. Prayer of Thanksgiving (1:4-9)
- II. Response to Oral Reports (1:10-6:20)
 - A. A Proper Perspective on Christian Ministers and Ministry (1:10-4:21)
 - 1. The Problem of Disunity (1:10-17)
 - 2. The Sin of Dependence on Personal Abilities (1:18-25)
 - 3. The Sin of Personal Boasting (1:26-31)
 - 4. Paul, a Model of Dependence on God (2:1-5)
 - 5. Spiritual Wisdom versus Worldly Wisdom (2:6-16)
 - 6. The Immaturity of the Corinthians (3:1-9)
 - 7. God's Evaluation of Christian Ministry (3:10-17)
 - 8. Final Argument Against Human Boasting (3:18-23)
 - 9. Paul's Example of Christian Ministry (4:1-21)
 - B. Immorality in the Church (5:1-13)
 - C. Disputes Between Believers (6:1-11)
 - D. Limitations on Freedom in Christ (6:12-20)
- III. Responses to a Letter from the Corinthians (7:1-16:4)
 - A. Matters related to Sex and Marriage (7:1-40)
 - 1. To the Married (7:1-7)
 - 2. To Singles and Widows (7:8-9)
 - 3. To Those in Difficult Marriages (7:10-24)
 - 4. To Virgins (7:25-38)
 - 5. To Widows (7:39-40)
 - B. Matters related to Idol Feasts (8:1-11:1)
 - 1. Food Offered to Idols (8:1-13)
 - 2. Paul Foregoes Rights of Apostle (9:1-27)
 - 3. Food Offered to Idols (continued; 10:1-11:1)
 - C. Matters related to Christian Worship (11:2-34)
 - 1. Gender Distinctions in Worship (11:2-16)
 - 2. Behavior During the Lord's Supper (11:17-34)
 - D. Matters related to Spiritual Gifts (12:1-14:40)
 - 1. Diversity of Gifts, Unity in the Body (12:1-31)
 - 2. The Supremacy of Love (13:1-13)
 - 3. Prophecy and Tongues (14:1-40)
 - E. Matters related to the Resurrection (15:1-58)
 - F. Matters related to the Relief Offering (16:1-4)
- IV. Conclusion (16:5-24)
 - A. Paul's Travel Plans (16:5-12)
 - B. Final Exhortations (16:13-18)
 - C. Closing (16:19-24)

¹ Adapted from Andreas J. Köstenberger, L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, The Cross, and The Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament* (Nashville, Tenn: B & H Academic, 2009), 482-483.

1 Corinthians

Overview

Background

You may want to consult a study Bible or Bible dictionary for help with these questions.

1. Who is the human author of this letter?

2. What do you know about him? (his background, his ministry, his culture)

3. Where was he when he wrote this letter?

4. Who are the recipients of this letter?

5. What do you know about them? (their relationship to the author, their circumstances, their relationship to God, their relationship to each other)

6. How are these people and their circumstances similar to us?

7. How are they different from us?

Major Themes

Read through the entire letter in one sitting and then answer the next few questions.

8. Why was this letter written? (Is the author addressing problems? Is his tone encouraging or confrontational? Does the author seem to have a primary purpose?)

9. What do you see as the primary themes of this letter? (If you can't decide on one, identify two or three prominent themes.)

10. What topics from the text are you excited about discussing in the next 2 weeks?

11. What questions do you have after reading through this book?

Worksheet 2: 1 Corinthians 1:1-2:5

Note on lesson format: First Corinthians is one of Paul's longer epistles, and in it he addresses a number of relevant issues. Due to the length of 1 Corinthians, we do not have space to include the text of each passage on the weekly worksheet. Instead, we encourage you to use this worksheet along with your own Bible to study the passage during the week.

Our study through this book will be at an accelerated pace. Over the course of the next twelve weeks, we'll be discussing the major themes of Paul's first letter to the Corinthian church.

On the attached page, you'll find an outline of the entire book of 1 Corinthians. On each week's worksheet, you'll find an abbreviated version of this same outline to help you place the current passage within the broader context of the book. You may find it helpful to keep the complete outline in your Bible or at the front of your study notes for easy reference.

To get the most benefit from this study, you should include readings from 1 Corinthians in your regular Bible study time and do your best to answer as many of the study questions on your own as possible.

Introduction: After Paul's opening greeting and prayer, he begins to address problems that he has heard about from Chloe's people (1:11). The first problem Paul addresses is the development of competing factions within the leadership of the Corinthian church (1:10-4:21). In this week's passage, Paul begins by pointing out that their infighting contradicts the gospel message (1:10-17). That message seems to be foolishness to most people (1:18-25), and God, in His wisdom, had chosen to save weak and unimpressive people (1:26-31). Unlike the factionalists at Corinth, Paul conducted himself in a manner that fit with the shameful message of the cross (2:1-5). Through this method, Paul was confident that the faith which he preached was not the result of human wisdom, but of God's divine power (2:5).

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 - 3. The Sin of Personal Boasting (1:26-31)
 - 4. Paul, a Model of Dependence on God (2:1-5)
 - [...]
 - B. Immorality in the Church (5:1-13)
 - C. Disputes Between Believers (6:1-11)
 - D. Limitations on Freedom in Christ (6:12-20)
- III. Responses to a Letter from the Corinthians (7:1-16:4)
- IV. Conclusion (16:5-24)

Interpretation: Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.

1. Paul mentions several people by name. What can you find out about these people elsewhere in Scripture?

Sosthenes (1:1)

Apollos (1:12)

Crispus (1:14)

Gaius (1:14)

Stephanus (1:16)

2. What do we learn about the church at Corinth and about God in 1:4–9?

3. What is the problem with the divisions at the church of Corinth, according to 1:13? Why would Paul be thankful that he had baptized so few of the Corinthian believers (1:14–17)?

4. How can Paul say that “the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing” (1:18)? What elements of the gospel message cause it to appear to be foolish?

5. Paul notes that the message of a crucified Christ was “a stumbling block” to Jews and “foolishness” to Greeks (1:23), but that for “those who are called” Christ is both “the power” and “wisdom” of God (1:24). How does the true meaning of the cross counter Jewish and Greek objections?

6. What is the reason that Paul gives for God’s choice of “the foolish/weak/base things” for salvation (1:28–31)?

7. When Paul says that he did not come to the Corinthians “with excellence of speech or of wisdom” (2:1) what does that tell us about his preaching? How does his presentation support his message?

Application: Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.

8. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

9. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

Worksheet 3: 1 Corinthians 2:6–3:23

Introduction:

In this week's passage, Paul continues to address the problem of the competing factions within the leadership of the Corinthian church (1:10–4:21). In last week's passage, Paul points out that his initial ministry amongst the Corinthians was not characterized by human wisdom (2:4). In 2:6, he points out that his ministry was characterized by wisdom, except that this wisdom is of a different kind. Unlike human wisdom, the wisdom that Paul taught was spiritual—it is the “wisdom of God” that can only be received by spiritual people through the revelation of the Holy Spirit (2:7, 10).

In chapter 3, Paul proceeds from contrasting the two kinds of wisdom to directly rebuking the Corinthians for their factionalism. Factionalism shows that the Corinthians are immature (3:1–4), and that they misunderstand the function of Christian ministry in their midst (3:5–9). In 3:10–15, Paul describes ministry through the metaphor of a construction supervisor. Here he explains that God is the final judge of faithfulness, not the Corinthians. Not only does God evaluate ministry, but He also takes the holiness of His people seriously—believers who defile themselves or others will be destroyed (3:16–17). After this warning, Paul challenges the Corinthians to avoid boasting in themselves and to instead rejoice in the riches they already have in Christ (3:18–23).

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 - 3. The Sin of Personal Boasting (1:26-31)
 - 4. Paul, a Model of Dependence on God (2:1-5)
 - 5. **Spiritual Wisdom versus Worldly Wisdom (2:6-16)**
 - 6. **The Immaturity of the Corinthians (3:1-9)**
 - 7. **God's Evaluation of Christian Ministry (3:10-17)**
 - 8. **Final Argument Against Human Boasting (3:18-23)**
 - 9. Paul's Example of Christian Ministry (4:1-21)
 - B. Immorality in the Church (5:1-13)
 - C. Disputes Between Believers (6:1-11)
 - D. Limitations on Freedom in Christ (6:12-20)
- III. Responses to a Letter from the Corinthians (7:1-16:4)
- IV. Conclusion (16:5-24)

¹ The complete outline is available on the Meadowlands Baptist Church website (www.meadowlandsbaptist.ca). Adapted from Andreas J. Köstenberger, L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, The Cross, and The Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament* (Nashville, Tenn: B & H Academic, 2009), 482–483.

Interpretation: Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.

1. Paul says that the wisdom of God is “in a mystery” in 2:7, and that if the rulers of this age had known the mystery they “would not have crucified the Lord of glory” (2:8). How does the mystery of the cross display the wisdom and majesty of God?

2. What does it mean for God to reveal the mystery to us through the Spirit (2:10-12)?

3. Paul explains that without the Spirit, it is impossible to understand spiritual truth (2:14). On the other hand, “he who is spiritual judges all things” (2:15). What does it mean to “judge all things” as a spiritual person? [Note: you may find it helpful to consult multiple translations on this phrase.]

4. What does it mean to be “carnal” rather than “spiritual” people (3:1)? How does the nearby context help you understand this verse?

5. What is the significance of 3:7–8 to Paul’s rebuke of the Corinthian’s factionalism?

6. What does it mean for the church at Corinth to be God’s “field” and His “building” (3:9)?

7. What does it mean for the church at Corinth to be the “temple of God” (3:17)?

8. What does Paul mean by “let him become a fool that he may become wise” (3:18)?

Application: Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.

9. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

10. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

Worksheet 4: 1 Corinthians 4:1–5:13

Introduction: In this week's passage, Paul concludes his discussion of the competing factions within the church at Corinth (1:10–4:21), and then moves on to discuss the problem of the Corinthian's toleration of immorality within the assembly (5:1–13).

In last week's passage, Paul has just explained the proper way for an individual to view themselves, challenging them not to boast in themselves but instead to rejoice in their riches in Christ (3:18–23).

Now, beginning in 4:1, Paul challenges the Corinthians to have a proper view of those who serve God. Any individual who serves God, Paul argues, will ultimately be evaluated by God Himself (4:2–3).

Accordingly, rather than evaluating God's servants according to human wisdom, Paul challenges the Corinthians to await the final judgment (4:4–5). In 4:6–13, Paul uses himself and Apollos as an example, arguing that just as it is foolish and wrong to exalt either Paul or Apollos over the other, so it is equally wrong and foolish to exalt any leader in the church over another. Paul then challenges the Corinthians to imitate him as their father in the gospel, and warns them that he will set things in order when he returns (4:14–21).

In chapter 5, Paul takes up a new, but related, topic. The spiritual arrogance at Corinth (mentioned in 4:18) has led the church to tolerate a man in the assembly who is flagrantly involved in odious sin (5:1). Rather than exercising church discipline (5:2), the Corinthians have boasted in their tolerance (5:6) of sin offensive even to pagans (5:1). This arrogance shows that they had ignored a previous letter of Paul's, where he exhorted them to avoid sexually immoral people (5:9) and to take responsibility for discipline within the church (5:12–13).

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 - 8. Final Argument Against Human Boasting (3:18–23)
 - 9. **Paul's Example of Christian Ministry (4:1–21)**
 - B. **Immorality in the Church (5:1–13)**
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Interpretation: Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.

1. Paul says in 4:3 that he is not very concerned about how other people evaluate him. Instead, he focuses on how God will judge him (4:4). How does Paul's perspective influence your definition of faithfulness (4:2)?

2. In 4:7, Paul asks "who makes you differ from another?" Other ways to read this phrase are "who made you so special?" or "who defines you?" Do you think Paul is saying that the Corinthians are special, or that they are deceiving themselves about their superiority? Why?

3. Identify the problem with the Corinthians' thinking described in 4:8–13. Then, attempt to explain Paul's solution.

4. Why is it important for Paul to state his motive in 4:14?

5. What problem concerns Paul the most in 5:1–5? Is it the individual sin (5:1) or the attitude of the church (5:2)? How does 5:6–8 influence your answer?

6. What is the significance of seeing Christ as "our Passover" to Paul's argument in 5:6–8?

7. If Paul "certainly did not" mean that the Corinthians should separate themselves from the sexually immoral of the world, why is he concerned about separating from those who sin in the church (5:9–11)?

8. What is the significance of Paul's list of disciplinary offenses in 5:11?

Application: Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.

9. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

10. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

Worksheet 5: 1 Corinthians 6:1–20

Introduction: In this week's passage, Paul addresses two additional issues as he wraps up his response to the oral reports he had received from Chloe's people.

The first of these issues appears in 6:1–11, as Paul responds to reports that people in the Corinthian church were settling differences between themselves by taking fellow Christians before the city courts. Paul calls this "an utter failure" (6:7), pointing out that the Corinthians misunderstood their Christian identity (6:2–4) and misrepresented the church before the world (6:6).

After addressing the problems with taking other Christians to court, in 6:12–20 Paul dismantles a line of thought that may have existed in the Corinthian church. This argument suggested that because Christians have freedom, they are therefore free to consort with prostitutes (6:15). Paul argues instead that such practice is outrageous, something which Christians should "flee" (6:18). He does not draw this conclusion simply from the prevailing moral assumptions of his time. Instead, Paul grounds his reasoning in theological truth. He explains in 6:19–20 that Christian people are possessed by the Holy Spirit as God's purchased possession, which means that freedom has its limits.

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 - 5. Spiritual Wisdom versus Worldly Wisdom (2:6–16)
 - 6. The Immaturity of the Corinthians (3:1–9)
 - 7. God's Evaluation of Christian Ministry (3:10–17)
 - 8. Final Argument Against Human Boasting (3:18–23)
 - 9. Paul's Example of Christian Ministry (4:1–21)
 - B. Immorality in the Church (5:1–13)
 - C. Disputes Between Believers (**6:1–11**)
 - D. Limitations on Freedom in Christ (**6:12–20**)
- III. Responses to a Letter from the Corinthians (7:1–16:4)
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Interpretation: Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.

- How does Paul expect the Corinthians to settle disputes if they are not to go before the courts (6:1)?

- What reasons does Paul give for not going before the courts in 6:2–6?

- What reason does Paul give for not going before the courts in 6:9–11?

- What principle about our human bodies does Paul state in 6:13b? Explain how this relates to what Paul says in 6:14.

- How does the Christian’s union with Christ (6:15–17) provide the doctrinal basis for the command to “flee sexual immorality” in 6:18?

- What does it mean to say that “your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you” (6:19)?

- If both your body and your spirit are God’s possessions (6:20), is it correct to say that a Christian can neglect either their physical health or their spiritual life? How should Christians think differently about both aspects of life?

Application: Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.

- What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

- How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

Worksheet 6: 1 Corinthians 7:1–40

Introduction: First Corinthians 7:1 marks a major transition in the structure of the book with the words, “now concerning the things of which you wrote to me.” Up to this point in the book, Paul has been treating the various issues that Chloe’s people mentioned to him in their oral report (1:11). Now, Paul takes up various questions which came to him in a letter from the church at Corinth—issues which dominate the remainder of the book of 1 Corinthians.

The first issue from their letter is the focus of chapter seven, our passage for this week. In this chapter, Paul confronts misunderstandings prevalent in the church at Corinth regarding marriage. For instance, there is good reason to believe that Paul is quoting a Corinthian slogan in 7:1b, a slogan which he then rejects in 7:2–5. Because Paul’s primary focus is the problem in Corinth, this chapter should not be understood as “a marriage manual or his systematic thoughts on marriage.”¹ Paul is seeking to correct an ascetic view of sex and marriage that apparently existed in the Corinthian church.

Paul applies a single principle, “remain as you are,” to a variety of situations in this chapter. These situations include those who are already married (7:2), singles (7:8), widows (7:8, 40), wives (7:10), husbands (7:11), spouses of unbelievers (7:12–16), and the engaged (7:26–27, 37). In each case, Paul provides limited exceptions to this general principle. A careful, contextual application of this chapter provides guidance in virtually any situation.

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¹ David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 242.

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Interpretation: Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.

1. What seems to be the Corinthian slogan in 7:1? What does this statement mean, and how does Paul argue that it is wrong in 7:2–5?

2. Explain God's command in 7:10–11.

3. How does Paul limit the exception in 7:15? Why does Paul encourage those married to unbelievers to remain as they are in 7:12–16?

4. What is the point of the illustrations in 7:18–22?

5. Considering what Paul says in 7:28, 38 (and throughout the rest of this chapter), is Paul condemning marriage in 7:25–27?

6. What is Paul's overriding concern in 7:32–35?

7. How does 7:36–38 provide an exception to what Paul says in 7:27? How does Paul limit that exception?

8. How do the instructions to widows in 7:39–40 express the general principle found throughout this chapter?

Application: Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.

9. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

10. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

Worksheet 7: 1 Corinthians 8:1–9:27

Introduction: In chapter 8, Paul picks up a new problem (the issue of food offered to idols) that was reported to him in the letter from Corinth. This problem occupies an extended space in the second half of First Corinthians, continuing through to 11:1. Our study this week will only cover a portion of Paul's discussion of this topic.

Chapter 8 introduces the basic outline of the problem. Apparently, people in the church at Corinth held to different positions on whether it was appropriate for Christians to eat food that was offered to idols at pagan temples. Some believed they had liberty to do so on the basis of their “knowledge” that idols are powerless (8:4), while others could not do so because of conscience (8:7). Paul challenges those who do not share the qualms of the “weak” to limit their freedom in consideration of others (8:9).

In chapter 9, Paul’s logic takes a surprising turn. Suddenly, Paul is defending his own rights and authority as an apostle. Apparently, some at Corinth may have been personally attacking Paul for various reasons. Their rejection of Paul meant that they had rejected his previous instructions on dealing with food offered to idols. Paul responds by defending his apostleship (9:1–14), and then reaffirming his apostolic rights (9:15–18), including his freedom to accept or reject various kinds of foods (9:19–23). In doing this, Paul seeks ultimately to exhibit self-discipline in his pursuit of his apostolic calling to preach the gospel (9:24–27).

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 - B. Matters related to Idol Feasts (8:1–11:1)**
 - 1. Food Offered to Idols (8:1–13)**
 - 2. Paul Foregoes Rights of Apostle (9:1–27)**
 - 3. Food Offered to Idols (continued; 10:1–11:1)
 - C. Matters related to Christian Worship (11:2–34)
 - D. Matters related to Spiritual Gifts (12:1–14:40)
 - E. Matters related to the Resurrection (15:1–58)
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Interpretation: Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.

1. Why does Paul contrast “love” and “knowledge” in 8:1?

2. How should Christians evaluate idols, based on 8:4–5? How does this contrast with the nature of God (8:6)?

3. According to the context, what causes “those who are weak” to stumble (8:9–10)? How should those with “knowledge” react to this possibility (8:11–13)?

4. What evidences does Paul give for his apostleship in 9:1–2?

5. What is the apostolic right that Paul defends in 9:3–14? How does Paul explain his choice to give it up in 9:15–18?

6. What is the overriding purpose behind the various ways that Paul made himself “a servant to all” in 9:19–22?

7. What character trait does Paul present in 9:24–25 as necessary for success in the Christian’s struggle with sin?

Application: Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.

8. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

9. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

Worksheet 8: 1 Corinthians 10:1-11:1

Introduction:

In chapter 10, Paul concludes his discussion of the matter of food offered to idols. After pointing to his own life as an example in chapter 9, Paul now provides two further examples in 10:1-22 to refute the Corinthians' practice of attending meals at pagan temples. In 10:1-13, Paul uses the example of Israel in the wilderness. In 10:14-22, Paul uses the example of the Lord's Supper (which will reappear as a topic of discussion in chapter 11). Arguing from both these examples that the Christian should not knowingly eat food that was offered to idols, Paul then gives practical admonitions for dealing with the issue in 10:23-11:1.

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 - A. A Proper Perspective on Christian Ministers and Ministry (1:10-4:21)
 - B. Immorality in the Church (5:1-13)
 - C. Disputes Between Believers (6:1-11)
 - D. Limitations on Freedom in Christ (6:12-20)
- III. Responses to a Letter from the Corinthians (7:1-16:4)
 - A. Matters related to Sex and Marriage (7:1-40)
 - B. Matters related to Idol Feasts (8:1-11:1)**
 - 1. Food Offered to Idols (8:1-13)
 - 2. Paul Foregoes Rights of Apostle (9:1-27)
 - 3. Food Offered to Idols (continued; 10:1-11:1)**
 - C. Matters related to Christian Worship (11:2-34)
 - D. Matters related to Spiritual Gifts (12:1-14:40)
 - E. Matters related to the Resurrection (15:1-58)
 - F. Matters related to the Relief Offering (16:1-4)
- IV. Conclusion (16:5-24)

¹ The complete outline is available on the Meadowlands Baptist Church website (www.meadowlandsbaptist.ca). Adapted from Andreas J. Köstenberger, L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, The Cross, and The Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament* (Nashville, Tenn: B & H Academic, 2009), 482-483.

Interpretation: Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.

1. Why is it important that our forefathers in Israel shared a common experience in Christ (10:1–4)?

2. What caused God to be displeased with them (10:5)?

3. What is the relationship between the examples in 10:6–11 and the warning in 10:12–13?

4. Why is it important for Paul to emphasize that all believers participate together in Christ through the cup and bread of communion (10:16–17)?

5. What is Paul saying in 10:18? (You might find 10:19–20 to be helpful.)

6. Explain how 10:21–22 reinforces Paul's conclusion regarding idol meat.

7. In 10:23, Paul twice repeats a Corinthian slogan that first appeared in 6:12. What is that slogan, and what is the principle that Paul defines in his response in 10:23–24?

8. How does Paul instruct the “strong” in 10:25–29?

9. What kind of behavior would bring glory to God in this situation (10:31)?

Application: Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.

10. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

11. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

Worksheet 9: 1 Corinthians 11:2-34

Introduction: In this chapter, Paul turns from the problem of idol food to two other problems within the Corinthian church. The first of these appears in 11:2-16, and the second in 11:17-34.

Producing a coherent interpretation of 11:2-16 has provided a historic challenge, leading some (but not all) interpreters to despair whether such a task is even possible. Part of the difficulty is that the passage uses several key terms without explanation and assumes knowledge of first-century cultural practices. Those customs are no longer obvious, nor is it clear how the passage ought to be applied within our own times. These uncertainties should inspire both caution and careful reflection as we seek to glean what we can from Paul's instruction.

In the remainder of chapter 11, Paul is clear. He seeks to correct errors in the Corinthian's practice of the Lord's Supper, and begins by explicitly identifying the nature of the problem at hand (11:17-22). After describing the problem, Paul reminds the Corinthians of the essential elements of the original meal which instituted the practice of communion (11:23-25) and exhorts them to "proclaim the Lord's death" by practicing valid communion "till He comes" (11:26). As he concludes his discussion of this topic, Paul provides practical guidelines for self-examination prior to participating in the Lord's Supper (11:27-34).

Abbreviated Outline¹ (current passage in bold):

- I. Introduction (1:1-9)
- II. Response to Oral Reports (1:10-6:20)
 - A. A Proper Perspective on Christian Ministers and Ministry (1:10-4:21)
 - B. Immorality in the Church (5:1-13)
 - C. Disputes Between Believers (6:1-11)
 - D. Limitations on Freedom in Christ (6:12-20)
- III. Responses to a Letter from the Corinthians (7:1-16:4)
 - A. Matters related to Sex and Marriage (7:1-40)
 - B. Matters related to Idol Feasts (8:1-11:1)
 - 1. Food Offered to Idols (8:1-13)
 - 2. Paul Foregoes Rights of Apostle (9:1-27)
 - 3. Food Offered to Idols (continued; 10:1-11:1)
 - C. **Matters related to Christian Worship (11:2-34)**
 - 1. **Gender Distinctions in Worship (11:2-16)**
 - 2. **Behavior During the Lord's Supper (11:17-34)**
 - D. Matters related to Spiritual Gifts (12:1-14:40)
 - E. Matters related to the Resurrection (15:1-58)
 - F. Matters related to the Relief Offering (16:1-4)
- IV. Conclusion (16:5-24)

¹ The complete outline is available on the Meadowlands Baptist Church website (www.meadowlandsbaptist.ca). Adapted from Andreas J. Köstenberger, L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, The Cross, and The Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament* (Nashville, Tenn: B & H Academic, 2009), 482-483.

Interpretation: Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.

- What brings shame to men (v. 4) and women (v. 5) in praying or prophesying?

- What reason does Paul give in vv. 8–9 for his statement that “woman is the glory of man” (v. 7)?

- What does Paul appeal to as evidence in 11:13–16 to answer his question, “is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?” (11:13)?

- What is the problem that Paul describes in 11:18? How does this undermine the significance of communion?

- If the church at Corinth was not eating the Lord’s Supper (11:20), what were they doing (11:21)?

- How does 11:22 identify those who would be “hungry” in 11:21?

- What is the message proclaimed by the proper practice of the Lord’s Supper (11:26)? How do the statements of 11:23b–25 proclaim this message?

- What does 11:27–32 tell us about the severity of error in the practice of communion?

Application: Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.

- Review 11:17–34 and develop a list of self-examination questions to use before taking the Lord’s Supper.

- What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

- How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

Worksheet 10: 1 Corinthians 12:1-13:13

Introduction: Chapters 12–14 introduce a new topic for Paul. This new topic, the role and exercise of spiritual gifts within the local assembly, evokes intense discussion today because of the rise of the Charismatic movement during the early twentieth century. All present-day concerns aside, however, this passage addresses a significant concern for the Corinthian church. It is our duty, therefore, to seek to understand (as much as possible) the nature of the original situation and the question which Paul seeks to address.

Paul introduces the question by quoting from the Corinthian letter in 12:1, “Now concerning the spiritual [gifts/ones]...” (lit.). Because of the ambiguity of Paul’s Greek here, we can infer two possibilities for the Corinthian’s original question. One commentator aptly describes the options: “Either the Corinthians want to know, ‘Which spiritual gift is the highest and best?’ or some are touting their own spiritual gift as ‘the highest and best.’” He goes on to explain that “from Paul’s perspective, the basic issues are, What does it mean to be spiritual? and How are Christians to exercise their spiritual gifts in the church?”¹ Paul drives toward an answer to these questions in chapters 12–14, summarizing his conclusions in 14:37–40.

The statements of chapter 13 are frequently lifted from their context by well-meaning Christians. To properly understand this chapter, we must see Paul’s point that the exercise of the spiritual gifts is regulated by love for our brothers and sisters in the local church. This is not to say that the chapter does not teach anything about “Christian love” on its own sake, but that Paul’s primary purpose is to describe it so that the Corinthians could exercise spiritual gifts in a loving way.

Abbreviated Outline² (current passage in bold):

- I. Introduction (1:1-9)
- II. Response to Oral Reports (1:10-6:20)
 - A. A Proper Perspective on Christian Ministers and Ministry (1:10-4:21)
 - B. Immorality in the Church (5:1-13)
 - C. Disputes Between Believers (6:1-11)
 - D. Limitations on Freedom in Christ (6:12-20)
- III. Responses to a Letter from the Corinthians (7:1-16:4)
 - A. Matters related to Sex and Marriage (7:1-40)
 - B. Matters related to Idol Feasts (8:1-11:1)
 - C. Matters related to Christian Worship (11:2-34)
 - D. Matters related to Spiritual Gifts (12:1-14:40)**
 - 1. Diversity of Gifts, Unity in the Body (12:1-31)**
 - 2. The Supremacy of Love (13:1-13)**
 - 3. Prophecy and Tongues (14:1-40)
 - E. Matters related to the Resurrection (15:1-58)
 - F. Matters related to the Relief Offering (16:1-4)
- IV. Conclusion (16:5-24)

¹ David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 558.

² The complete outline is available on the Meadowlands Baptist Church website (www.meadowlansbaptist.ca). Adapted from Andreas J. Köstenberger, L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, The Cross, and The Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament* (Nashville, Tenn: B & H Academic, 2009), 482–483.

Interpretation: Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.

1. Complete this phrase, using statements from chapter 12 (include references), “It is loving to use one’s gifts...”

2. Complete this phrase, using statements from chapter 13 (include references), “It is loving...”

3. What is a “spiritual gift”? Consider 12:1, 4, 7, 9, 28, 30, 31 and 14:1.

4. What three things are different in 12:4–6?

5. How many spiritual gifts does an individual receive, according to 12:7–11? Who decides which spiritual gifts an individual receives (12:11)?

6. Restate 12:31b in your own words and explain how Paul is transitioning to his point in chapter 13.

7. According to 13:1–3, what is most important—which gifts you have, what mysteries you understand, how much faith you have, or something else? Why?

8. How should believers seek to live, according to 13:8–13?

Application: Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.

9. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

10. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

Worksheet 11: 1 Corinthians 14:1–40

Introduction: Chapter 14 draws Paul's discussion on the matter of spiritual gifts to a close. Once again, Paul's conclusion focuses on practical application. Paul's applications in this chapter fit under two broad headings: a) the need for intelligibility (14:1–25), and b) the need for order (14:26–40).

A key point for understanding this chapter is to identify the first-century gift of tongues as the Spirit-given ability to speak in (previously unstudied) foreign human languages. This provides the most natural reading of 14:9–11 and 14:22–25. Although this definition is uncommon within the modern Charismatic movement, it corresponds with the practice of tongues in the New Testament church and historical evidence from the writings of ancient Christians.¹

Abbreviated Outline² (current passage in bold):

- I. Introduction (1:1–9)
- II. Response to Oral Reports (1:10–6:20)
 - A. A Proper Perspective on Christian Ministers and Ministry (1:10–4:21)
 - B. Immorality in the Church (5:1–13)
 - C. Disputes Between Believers (6:1–11)
 - D. Limitations on Freedom in Christ (6:12–20)
- III. Responses to a Letter from the Corinthians (7:1–16:4)
 - A. Matters related to Sex and Marriage (7:1–40)
 - B. Matters related to Idol Feasts (8:1–11:1)
 - C. Matters related to Christian Worship (11:2–34)
 - D. Matters related to Spiritual Gifts (12:1–14:40)**
 - 1. Diversity of Gifts, Unity in the Body (12:1–31)
 - 2. The Supremacy of Love (13:1–13)
 - 3. Prophecy and Tongues (14:1–40)**
 - E. Matters related to the Resurrection (15:1–58)
 - F. Matters related to the Relief Offering (16:1–4)
- IV. Conclusion (16:5–24)

¹ See quotations from Gregory of Nazianzus, John Chrysostom, and Augustine in John MacArthur, *Strange Fire: The Danger of Offending the Holy Spirit with Counterfeit Worship* (Nashville: Nelson Books, 2013), 139.

² The complete outline is available on the Meadowlands Baptist Church website (www.meadowlansbaptist.ca). Adapted from Andreas J. Köstenberger, L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, The Cross, and The Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2009), 482–483.

Interpretation: Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.

1. Complete this phrase, using statements from chapter 14 (include references), “It is loving to build up the entire church by...”

2. Which is more important (prophecy or tongues) in 14:1–19, and why?

3. What is the point of Paul’s illustration from musical instruments (14:7–8), based on the immediate context?

4. What does Paul mean when he says in 14:14, “if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful”? [Hint: Consider the nearby context in 14:13–17.]

5. Paul quotes Isa. 28:11–12 in 14:21. Based on this quotation, he concludes “tongues are for a sign ... to unbelievers” and “prophesying is [a sign to] ... those who believe” (14:22). How do tongues and prophecy function as signs?

6. What promotes understanding in the church, according to 20–36?

7. Summarize Paul’s guidelines for women in 14:34–35. Consider the relationship of this text with these cross-references: Eph. 5:21–24; Col. 3:18; 1 Tim. 2:11–15; Tit. 2:3–5; 1 Pet. 3:1–6.

8. Why should someone who claims spiritual wisdom acknowledge Paul’s writings as authoritative (14:37)?

Application: Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.

9. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

10. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

Worksheet 12: 1 Corinthians 15:1–58

Introduction: In chapter 15, Paul turns to one last issue to which he devotes extended attention. Apparently, some individuals in the Corinthian church denied the bodily resurrection of believers (15:12).

Paul begins to address this idea by establishing that the resurrection of Christ is an historical fact (15:1–11). Then, in 15:12–34, he shows how belief in the resurrection of Christ contradicts denial of the future resurrection of believers. If the dead are not raised, Paul says, then Christ’s resurrection is creative fiction and Christian faith and preaching is “empty” (15:14).

After developing his rationale for accepting both the resurrection of Christ and believers, Paul then answers potential objections regarding the form of the resurrection body in 15:35–58. Using numerous analogies, he explains that the resurrection of the dead involves a transformation of the physical body into an “incorruptible” body (15:54). As a result, the believer can look forward to the glory of the resurrection and victory over the present struggle with sin (15:57).

Abbreviated Outline¹ (current passage in bold):

- I. Introduction (1:1–9)
- II. Response to Oral Reports (1:10–6:20)
 - A. A Proper Perspective on Christian Ministers and Ministry (1:10–4:21)
 - B. Immorality in the Church (5:1–13)
 - C. Disputes Between Believers (6:1–11)
 - D. Limitations on Freedom in Christ (6:12–20)
- III. Responses to a Letter from the Corinthians (7:1–16:4)
 - A. Matters related to Sex and Marriage (7:1–40)
 - B. Matters related to Idol Feasts (8:1–11:1)
 - C. Matters related to Christian Worship (11:2–34)
 - D. Matters related to Spiritual Gifts (12:1–14:40)
 - 1. Diversity of Gifts, Unity in the Body (12:1–31)
 - 2. The Supremacy of Love (13:1–13)
 - 3. Prophecy and Tongues (14:1–40)
- E. **Matters related to the Resurrection (15:1–58)**
- F. Matters related to the Relief Offering (16:1–4)
- IV. Conclusion (16:5–24)

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Interpretation: Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.

- After reviewing post-resurrection appearances of Christ to the apostles, Paul claims that he and all the other apostles preached the resurrected Christ (15:11). What does the unanimity of apostolic preaching teach us about Christ's resurrection?

- In 15:13–19, Paul lists the logical consequences of denying the resurrection of Christ. Describe the importance of the cross and resurrection to the Christian faith.

- Why is it necessary for the resurrection of the dead to come "by Man" (15:21)? How does Rom. 5:12–21 help us understand this passage?

- What is the single point of comparison in the various analogies Paul uses in 15:36–41? How does this similarity contribute to Paul's point about the resurrection in 15:42–45?

- What does Paul mean when he says, "the strength of sin is the law" (15:56)?

- What means does God use to give us the victory over death (15:57), and what guarantee do we have that this victory will occur?

- Why does Paul conclude this chapter with a challenge to continued faithfulness in the present life (15:58)?

Application: Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.

- What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

- How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

Worksheet 13: 1 Corinthians 16:1-24

Introduction: In the concluding chapter of 1 Corinthians, Paul wraps up the letter with final instructions regarding an offering for the church in Jerusalem (16:1-4), a word about his own plans and the plans of Timothy and Apollos (16:5-12), closing exhortations (16:13-14), commendations and greetings (16:15-20), and Paul's farewell (16:21-24).

Some of the topics in this chapter, such as the collection and Paul's travel plans, will become major issues by the time Paul writes 2 Corinthians. At this point, Paul is brief as he concludes this major letter addressing challenges within the church at Corinth.

Abbreviated Outline¹ (current passage in bold):

- I. Introduction (1:1-9)
- II. Response to Oral Reports (1:10-6:20)
 - A. A Proper Perspective on Christian Ministers and Ministry (1:10-4:21)
 - B. Immorality in the Church (5:1-13)
 - C. Disputes Between Believers (6:1-11)
 - D. Limitations on Freedom in Christ (6:12-20)
- III. Responses to a Letter from the Corinthians (7:1-16:4)
 - A. Matters related to Sex and Marriage (7:1-40)
 - B. Matters related to Idol Feasts (8:1-11:1)
 - C. Matters related to Christian Worship (11:2-34)
 - D. Matters related to Spiritual Gifts (12:1-14:40)
 - 1. Diversity of Gifts, Unity in the Body (12:1-31)
 - 2. The Supremacy of Love (13:1-13)
 - 3. Prophecy and Tongues (14:1-40)
 - E. Matters related to the Resurrection (15:1-58)
 - F. **Matters related to the Relief Offering (16:1-4)**
- IV. Conclusion (16:5-24)

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Interpretation: Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.

1. Summarize Paul's instructions in 16:2 regarding the collection. How much does Paul ask the Corinthians to give in this verse?

2. How does Paul instruct the Corinthians to respond to Timothy (16:10–11)? What does this teach us about the relationship between a church and a faithful minister of the Lord?

3. Explain the relationship between 16:13 and 16:22, and then consider the relationship between these verses and the rest of the epistle of 1 Corinthians.

4. Why does Paul commend Stephanus, Fortunatus, and Achaicus to the Corinthian church (16:17–18)?

Application: Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.

5. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

6. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?

Review: Take a few moments to look back through your study of 1 Corinthians.

7. What are some passages/topics in 1 Corinthians that you found to be particularly challenging?

8. What are some passages/topics in 1 Corinthians that you found particularly helpful?
